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Community Health Status Assessment Released Online In Davis County

(Clearfield, Utah) – Davis County's comprehensive Community Health Status Assessment was released online July 31 showing where the county is doing well and areas where there are opportunities to improve, according to Lewis Garrett, director of the Davis County Health Department. "This important health assessment is a snapshot in time describing the health of Davis County."

The assessment draws on more than 50 sources of local and state data as well as reports from national organizations.

The assessment includes recent statistics for many factors influencing health such as obesity, teen birth rates, disease rates, tobacco and alcohol use, access to physicians and dentists, cost of healthcare, rates of high school graduation and college attendance, rates of childhood poverty, percentage of children living in single parent households, air pollution, access to healthy foods, levels of physical inactivity, access to parks and recreation, and many more.

The new health assessment reports social and economic factors, also known as the social determinants of health. These factors may have more influence on health than other types of health factors. Communities with more income and education are healthier, as is the case in Davis County. "When compared to Utah and the U.S., Davis County is more educated, has less unemployment, less poverty, more home owners, more social support, and less violent crime," said Isa Perry, Community Outreach Planner for the county's health department.

Davis County is listed as the 6th healthiest county in Utah according to a national report called the County Health Rankings. The rankings show that Davis County is in the top 10% (best) of all counties in the U.S. for some health indicators including premature death, poor/fair health, adult smoking, adult obesity, physical inactivity, motor vehicle crash rate, preventable hospital stays (Medicare enrollees), some college, children in poverty, inadequate social support, and children in single-parent households. "Davis County meets the national benchmark, the 90th percentile, for more than 30% of measures in the rankings," said Perry.

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Page 2 of 2 – Community Health Status Assessment Released Online In Davis County

Davis County also is doing well by meeting and exceeding many Healthy People 2020 targets which are the 10-year national objectives for improving the health of Americans from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A few areas where targets are not being met include prostate cancer deaths, poisoning deaths, suicide, *E.coli* rates, seatbelt use, sun safety practice, mammograms, colorectal cancer screening, diabetes A1C tests, pneumococcal vaccine (adults), adequate immunizations by kindergarten, and high school graduation (9th grade grouping), said Perry.

Other indicators where Davis County compares poorly with the national average, state average, or other local health departments include prostate cancer incidence, asthma prevalence, chlamydia incidence, depression, high blood pressure management, rate of primary care and mental health providers, air quality, and food environment.

Perry said that in addition to gathering health statistics, the Davis County Health Department has conducted other assessments through interviewing and surveying residents to gather informed opinions about health needs and priorities in the county. Two leading health concerns identified by Davis County residents are air quality and obesity.

“While there are many reasons Davis County is a healthy place to live, this assessment shows there is room for improvement,” said Garrett. “By examining health indicators found in the County Health Rankings and assessing other health data and factors, groundwork is being laid for health improvement efforts.”

“Collaboration is critical,” he said. “We all have a stake in creating a healthier community and no single agency can address all the health challenges of our county.”

The just released Community Health Status Assessment and related improvement efforts have a tag line of “Your Community. Your Health. Your Voice.” According to Perry, this helps convey the purpose of the work. “The information in the health assessment will be used to educate and mobilize Davis County residents, develop priorities, advocate for resources, and plan actions to improve the health of the county,” she said. “Public health partners, local leaders, and citizens can work together to create a healthier place to live, learn, work and play.”

A copy of the Davis County Community Health Status Assessment is available online at http://www.daviscountyutah.gov/health/featured_items/Community_Health_Status_Assessment_2013.pdf.

The annual County Health Rankings is a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. For more information, visit www.countyhealthrankings.org.

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